

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

Draft 3-25-10

1. Name of Property

historic name H.W. Gates Funeral Home

other names/site number Ronald McDonald House; 209-2820-00611

2. Location

street & number 1901 Olathe Boulevard [N/A] not for publication

city or town Kansas City [N/A] vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Wyandotte code 209 zip code 66103

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner/Deputy SHPO Date

Kansas State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [].
☐ determined eligible for the
National Register
See continuation sheet [].
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
☐ removed from the
National Register
☐ other, explain
See continuation sheet [].

Signature of the Keeper

Date

H.W. Gates Funeral Home
Wyandotte County, Kansas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	1	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		sites
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		structures
			objects
		1	Total

<p>Name of related multiple property listing.</p> <p>N/A</p>	<p>Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.</p> <p>N/A</p>
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6. Function or Use

<p>Historic Function FUNERARY: Funeral Home DOMESTIC: Single-Family Residence</p>	<p>Current Functions VACANT</p>
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7. Description

<p>Architectural Classification LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Neoclassical</p>	<p>Materials Foundation: STONE Walls: STUCCO Roof: ASPHALT Other:</p>
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Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

H.W. Gates Funeral Home
Wyandotte County, Kansas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

Commerce

Architecture

Periods of Significance

1922-1957

Significant Dates

1922

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Wilson, Fred S. (Architect)

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☒ Local Government

☐ University

☒ Other:

Name of repository: Kansas City, Kansas Public Library;
Kansas City, Missouri Public Library

H.W. Gates Funeral Home
Wyandotte County, Kansas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone Easting Northing
15 360920 4323840

B. Zone Easting Northing

C. Zone Easting Northing

D. Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Rosin, Principal and Kristen Ottesen, Associate

organization Rosin Preservation, LLC date December 27, 2007

street & number 215 W. 18th Street, Suite 150 telephone 816-472-4950

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black-and-white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name MPM Heartland House LLC

street & number 200 Clarendon Street, 54th Floor telephone 816-412-0208

city or town Boston state MA zip code 02116

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Number 7 Page 1

H.W. Gates Funeral Home
Wyandotte County, Kansas

SUMMARY

The H.W. Gates Funeral Home at 1901 Olathe Boulevard, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas was designed in 1922 in the Neoclassical style by Kansas City, Kansas architect Fred S. Wilson. The two-and-one-half-story building has a stone foundation, stucco walls, and an asphalt-shingled roof. The symmetrical, north-facing primary elevation communicates the building's interior central hall plan. Other details that reinforce the Neoclassical design include the two-story columned front porch; cornice returns in the gable ends of the main roof and dormers; dentiled entablatures encircling the eaves; a fan light and sidelights at the main entrance; a Palladian window in the east gable end; window surrounds with articulated keystones at the first story openings; arched openings at the third story; and multi-light windows. The interior layout experienced significant changes in 1980 when the house was converted into a residential facility for the Ronald McDonald Charities. However, the building exterior retains excellent integrity and clearly communicates the original, formal architectural design of the H.W. Gates Funeral Home.

ELABORATION

SITE

The H.W. Gates Funeral Home occupies the southwest corner of State Line Road and Olathe Boulevard, just west of the Kansas-Missouri state line (*see Figure 1*). This location is approximately three miles southeast of downtown Kansas City, Kansas and the same distance southwest of downtown Kansas City, Missouri. There are residential neighborhoods south and east of the building, commercial development to the north, and the campus of the University of Kansas Medical Center to the east. South of the Gates Funeral Home is the Hanover Heights area of Kansas City, Kansas, while the neighborhood to the east is in Kansas City, Missouri. Both neighborhoods contain an eclectic mix of early-twentieth century single-family and multi-family dwellings. The small-scale brick commercial development immediately to the north and a few blocks away along 39th Street dates to the same period. To the west, mid- to late-twentieth century institutional buildings and parking structures dominate the medical center campus.

Small areas of grass abut the house on the north and east sides. A playground occupies a vacant lot immediately west of the house. Directly behind the house to the south is an asphalt-paved parking lot. Concrete sidewalks circulate around the house. A concrete ramp with iron railings rises from the parking lot to the door on the rear (south) elevation to provide wheelchair access. Large deciduous trees shade the house on the west and south sides. Shrubs are planted along the foundation on all elevations.

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HOUSE

Exterior

The rectangular footprint of the H.W. Gates Funeral Home is composed of a primary, north-facing, side-gabled block and a rear, hip-roof block. A one-story extension with a shed roof spans the width of the rear (south) elevation. A front-gabled sun room projects to the south at the second story above the one-story block. Below the sun room is an open porch. A one-story screened porch has been created from the historic porte-cochere centered on the west elevation, and an oriel projects at the first story on the east elevation.

The complex roof shape belies the formal Neoclassical design of the primary elevation. There are six front-gabled dormers. Three dormers are evenly spaced across the front (north) roof slope. The remaining three dormers face east, south, and west and rise from the hip roof. Single, exterior chimneys rise through the east and west ends of the north gable roof slope.

A two-story porch spans the center three bays of the primary, north-facing façade. Four full-height Doric columns support the front edge of the porch roof. The entablature includes a tall fascia and dentils. Stucco pilasters, engaged at the wall of the house, parallel the placement of the outer columns.

At the center of the porch is the main entrance. The stately arched opening features a paneled door topped by a leaded fan light and flanked by leaded sidelights. Engaged, fluted pilasters frame the door and sidelights. A keystone ornaments the arch above the fan light. Above the main doorway on the second story is a tripartite window accented by a balconette with classical details, including geometric railings and scrolled brackets.

The rear porch is non-historic, although its design complements the historic character of the building. Grouped sets of two and three columns support the roof. Dentils accent the eave line.

Fenestration is symmetrical across the primary (north) façade and somewhat irregular on the other elevations. Wood double-hung windows, typically configured with six-over-one lights, fill all of the openings. Aluminum storm windows cover the windows. The dormers have non-historic windows with a one-over-one configuration. The bay on the east elevation has multi-light casement windows topped by multi-light transoms. Plywood covers a tripartite opening in the south elevation of the sunroom.

Interior

The interior of the H.W. Gates Funeral Home was reconfigured in 1980 when the Ronald McDonald Charities converted the property into a residential facility. New partitions were added to create a functional layout for the new users. Despite these changes, many elements survive to communicate the historic arrangement of spaces and

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appearance of the building. The historic configuration of the stair and stair hall remains intact as it rises from the first floor to the third floor. On the first floor, the central entrance hall and the east parlor have exposed hardwood floors. The east parlor and the room above it on the second floor (most likely the parlor from the residential quarters) also retain historic fireplace mantels. Plaster walls and wood window casings are extant throughout the house, and it is likely that hardwood floors survive in other locations beneath carpet and vinyl tile.

INTEGRITY

Despite the changes made in 1980, the H.W. Gates Funeral Home maintains sufficient architectural integrity to communicate its historic function as a funeral home and residence. The historic Neoclassical design remains intact on the exterior. Alterations are largely limited to accessibility modifications to the rear elevation, enclosure of the porte-cochere on the west elevation, and replacement of some dormer window sashes. Interior alterations generally reflect the non-historic reconfiguration of the upper floors into small apartments. However, the central hall and stair, the key features that organize the building interior, survive intact through all three floors of the building. The main entrance hall and east parlor also retain their historic configuration. Other surviving historic interior features include fireplace mantels in the first and second floor east rooms; original plaster perimeter walls; and wood window trim. Hardwood floors are exposed in the entrance hall and east parlor and are likely extant in other locations under carpet and vinyl tile.

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H.W. Gates Funeral Home
Wyandotte County, Kansas

SUMMARY

The H.W. Gates Funeral Home at 1901 Olathe Boulevard, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas was constructed in 1922 for undertakers Horatio and Mary Gates. The property is locally significant under Criterion C for the area of ARCHITECTURE and Criterion A for the area of COMMERCE. The building illustrates the funeral home property type constructed throughout the United States during the early twentieth century. The Neoclassical design communicates an air of importance and evokes feelings of domesticity and comfort, while its large size accommodated the business needs of the funeral parlor as well as living quarters for the undertaker's family. This was the third home of the H.W. Gates Funeral Home, a family business run by three generations of the Gates family for nearly a century. The period of significance, 1922-1959, begins with the building's construction and ends with the 50-year cut-off date imposed by the National Register program.

ELABORATION

THE AMERICAN FUNERAL INDUSTRY¹

The Rise of the Funeral Industry

The modern American funeral industry developed slowly at the end of the nineteenth-century after embalming gained acceptance during the Civil War. Prior to this, family members typically prepared their dead for burial without embalming. The use of embalming was largely limited to medical schools, where students dissected embalmed cadavers as part of their studies. The secretive nature of medical training and problems associated with stealing corpses from graveyards raised fears among the American public that embalming involved bodily mutilation. During the Civil War, when thousands of soldiers died on battlefields or in hospitals far from home, embalming allowed their bodies to be returned to their families for burial. Embalming gained further legitimacy when the body of President Abraham Lincoln was embalmed so that it could be transported from Washington, D.C. to Springfield, Illinois for burial.

By the turn of the twentieth century, changing standards for personal hygiene and public sanitation (particularly in urban areas) as well as advances in modern science and medicine significantly reduced the occurrence of pandemics, which had historically caused abundant deaths. As mortality rates decreased and longevity increased, degenerative diseases and accidents replaced infectious diseases as the most common causes of death. The evolution of the medical practice also led to a rapid rise in the number of hospitals across the United States. One survey documented a 3800 percent rise in the number of hospitals nationwide between 1873 and 1920. While

¹ Unless otherwise noted, context for the development of funeral homes is drawn from Gary Laderman, *Rest in Peace: a Cultural History of Death and the Funeral Home in Twentieth-Century America*, (New York: Oxford University Press), 2003.

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most of the growth occurred in urban areas, hospitals and medical facilities also began appearing in smaller towns and in rural areas. The proliferation of medical facilities meant that patients were increasingly treated in hospitals instead of at home. Consequently, more deaths occurred in hospital as well. The process of dying at a hospital involved scientific and technological intervention that differentiated the experience from dying in the home, where one was typically surrounded by prayer and family.

As death moved farther away from everyday experience, the funeral industry began to flourish. The public welcomed the involvement of undertakers who took charge of preparing the corpse for burial. By the late nineteenth century, most communities had at least one undertaker who would embalm the body; make the necessary arrangements for visitation; and coordinate the burial. The work of embalming might occur in the home of the deceased or in the undertaker's place of business, quite often a livery stable or furniture store. These practitioners generally learned embalming techniques from other undertakers, many of whom had acquired their expertise in the field during the Civil War.

During the early twentieth century, the American funerary industry became increasingly professional. Undertakers received training at mortuary conferences and at specialized schools that opened across the country. As a typical course of study expanded from six weeks to nine months, the curriculum evolved to include subjects such as anatomy and chemistry. Graduates of these programs joined professional associations at the national and state levels, subscribed to trade journals, and received licenses to practice their profession. By 1940 the term "funeral director" was preferred over "undertaker." This change in title reflected the changing identity of the funeral home owner from a technical and scientific profession to one that incorporated social, psychological and business skills as well as the technical aspects of preparing a body for burial.

Within a thirty-year period, the number of undertakers in the United States increased by 150 percent, growing from just under 10,000 in 1890 to nearly 25,000 in 1920, even as the national death rate dropped. Locally, the number of undertakers working in the Kansas City area followed this national trend. The 1895 city directory listed ten undertakers in Kansas City, Missouri and five in Kansas City, Kansas; the 1920 city directory lists thirty-seven undertakers in Kansas City, Missouri and thirteen in Kansas City, Kansas, representing growth of over 300 percent in just twenty-five years.

The Funeral Home

As more people spent their final hours in a hospital and as living quarters, particularly in urban areas, became smaller, it soon became the norm for undertakers to direct the entire funeral and burial process from buildings that they owned, which they offered to the family of the deceased for a memorial or funeral ceremony. Commercial buildings housed some early funeral parlors, but the residential-style "funeral home" quickly gained favor. It provided comforting domestic qualities that were reminiscent of the funeral services routinely held in the parlor of

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the deceased's home just a few decades earlier, but without bringing the taint of death into one's personal home. Offering mourners an atmosphere that was peaceful, reverent, and soothing, by the 1920s funeral homes had replaced parlors and churches as the primary location for funerary activities in larger towns and urban areas.

Although it resembled a single-family home, and indeed usually housed living quarters for the funeral director's family on the upper floors, the interior layout and appearance of the funeral home was specialized. It generally included preparation rooms for embalming the corpses, a public showroom where the funeral director could assist families in the selection of a coffin, an office for the funeral director, a private "parlor" room where family and friends could view the body (often called a "slumber room"), and a chapel for funeral services. Designed to look like a bedroom, the slumber room was a particularly important part of the modern funerary process. It allowed family and friends to spend time with the deceased in a setting that recalled a traditional death scene in a private home. The introduction of music into the funeral service also prompted the installation of organs in many funeral homes.

The presence of the funeral director's children in the house and the increasing involvement of funeral directors' wives in a previously male-dominated business reinforced the domestic qualities of the funeral home. Like the wives of other middle-class business owners, funeral directors' wives participated in the daily running of the operation. Their responsibilities ranged from bookkeeping to planning funerals to applying makeup to the deceased prior to viewing. Their maternal touch was also considered important for families faced with planning a child's funeral. Professional associations and conferences conducted special seminars for women in the funeral industry. Children raised in the business often joined their parents in business and later assumed operation of the funeral home when their parents retired. Multi-generational involvement with a funeral home reinforced the connections between the business and the community.

After World War II, there was a distinct change in the funeral industry. The migration of Americans from rural areas to urban centers placed increased demand on existing funeral homes. At the same time, the children of funeral directors often chose to pursue other career paths.

In the middle of the twentieth century the funeral industry came under fire. In 1963 a book titled *The American Way of Death* by Jessica Mitford harshly criticized the funeral industry, creating public awareness of the high cost of funerals, unscrupulous practices, and lack of options for those desiring services outside the established industry norm. The book had a profoundly negative impact on public perception of funeral directors and the industry. Seizing onto the report, the media ran sensational stories about funeral directors charging exorbitant fees for funerals and taking advantage of grief-stricken families or of certain ethnic groups who would pay high-dollar for

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extravagant funerals. Several portrayals of undertakers in other literature also contributed to their stereotypical image as money-hungry and insensitive.²

Despite the negative publicity, funeral homes remained a central part of the American death experience. By this time, the American public widely accepted the practices established by the funeral home industry at the start of the century, and the local funeral director was a neighbor who generally enjoyed community support.

Toward the end of the twentieth century, mergers and buy-outs created corporate conglomerates that often edged out the local, family-owned funeral home. Although fewer in number, individual funeral homes remain in business, particularly in smaller communities. The directors of these funeral homes remain active members of their local community and they continue to offer personal service and attention that distinguishes them from their corporate competitors.

THE H.W. GATES FAMILY AND FUNERAL HOME³

The history of the H.W. Gates Funeral Home closely follows the trajectory of the American funeral industry. Horatio W. Gates arrived in Kansas City in 1867 from Ohio, where he was born in 1849. Gates was the nephew of Dr. Simeon Bell, a prominent member of the Rosedale, Kansas community and the benefactor of the Eleanor Taylor Bell Memorial Hospital. Prior to settling in Rosedale, Horatio Gates lived in DeSoto, Kansas where he farmed and raised draft horses. After selling the farm he moved Rosedale, establishing a wagon and livery yard at 29 Southwest Boulevard by 1890. This location at the corner of State Line Road and Southwest Boulevard is just a few blocks north of the nominated property. Gates lived on the property and also let rooms to travelers who stopped at the livery.

In 1892 Gates married Mary Louther. They continued to operate the livery until around 1918, but also established an undertaking business at their property around the turn of the century.⁴ In 1897, Horatio Gates helped organize the Kansas Funeral Directors Association and served as its president in 1899. Mary Gates appears to have been an equal business partner with her husband at a time when women generally had little involvement in the undertaking industry. She was the first secretary of the Kansas Funeral Directors Association and served as treasurer of the organization for thirty-five years beginning in 1899. Active with the Embalmer's Board of

² "Funeral Industry," Encyclopedia of Death and Dying, <http://www.deathreference.com/En-Gh/Funeral-Industry.html>, Internet, accessed 9 October 2007.

³ Unless otherwise noted, biographical information on the Gates family is drawn from: Margaret Landis, "Gates Family had Long History in Rosedale," *Kansas City Kansan*, 1 December 1985, page 5B; www.kckpl.lib.ks.us/kscoll/loclist/thennow/TN34.htm, Internet, accessed 5 September 2007.

⁴ *Hoye's City Directory of Kansas City, Missouri*, Vol. XXXII, (Kansas City: Hoye Directory Company, 1902), Kansas City (Missouri) Public Library, Microfilm.

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Kansas, the Gates were among the first embalmers licensed by the state. They were also licensed in Missouri, where Mary Gates was the first woman to receive an undertaker's license.

The first city directory reference to the Gates as undertakers appears in 1902, although given their early involvement in the industry it is likely that they operated an undertaking business through their livery stable earlier than this. Their advertisement in the 1905 city directory supports this assumption (*see Figure 2*). After announcing in large type their credentials as "Funeral Directors and licensed embalmers," the ad describes the "Rubber Tired" ambulances and carriages that could be hired for "Funerals, Weddings, Parties and Hospital Calls." During these early years, only a handful of undertakers operated in Kansas City, Kansas, and the Gates were the only undertakers in the Rosedale area.

In 1915, Horatio and Mary Gates erected a wood-frame funeral parlor on their property. A historic photo shows a one-story building with a decidedly commercial appearance (*see Figure 3*). At one end of the façade was a tall vehicular bay and at the other end was a typical commercial storefront. Horatio and Mary posed next to an automobile in front of the building.

Two years later, the frame mortuary building burned, and the Gates built a new brick funeral parlor in the same location. Trees cover most of the building in a circa 1920 photograph (*see Figure 4*), but the one-story mass appears to have a shaped parapet and a small porch with classical columns. The Gates' two-story dwelling sits just to the west on the same parcel. Although this is not yet a "home-like" funeral parlor design, the building has lost some of its strong commercial features in favor of an appearance that is more civic and classical.

After operating their business on Southwest Boulevard for over twenty years, Horatio and Mary Gates closed the livery stable and built a new funeral home (the nominated property) in the burgeoning Hanover Heights neighborhood in 1922. The new Neoclassical-style building at the southwest corner of Olathe Boulevard and State Line Road reflected the changing fashion of the funeral industry. Compared to their earlier commercial-style buildings, the new funeral home exuded domesticity and projected a stately appearance. The Gates family lived in the upper floors and conducted the funeral business in the lower floors. Situated in a residential area, the house and the Gates family were very much part of their neighborhood and of the larger community. In addition to his business activities, Horatio served as president of the Twin City State Bank, located at the northwest corner of 43rd Street and State Line Road.⁵

As was common in the industry, the Gates Funeral Home was very much a family establishment. From the beginning, Horatio and Mary ran the business together. Their son Miles and son-in-law Frank S. Wickert

⁵ Cydney Millstein, "Hanover Heights Historic District," Survey Report, 1987. On file at the Historic Preservation Office, Urban Planning/Zoning Department, Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas.

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(married to Horatio and Mary's daughter Marguerite) joined them later.⁶ Horatio Gates died in 1930, followed by Mary in 1960. Miles' son John S. Gates became the third generation to run the family business.

When John Gates retired the business did not pass to another family member. After three generations and nearly one hundred years the local, family-owned business came to an end. Following trends in the funeral industry, McGilley Memorial Chapels, a corporate purveyor of undertaking and funeral needs, purchased the Gates Funeral Home. At the time, McGilley Memorial Chapels operated two other locations in Kansas City, Missouri, including one just a few miles away at 20 East Linwood Boulevard.

McGilley Memorial Chapels did not utilize the building, but transferred it to the Children's Oncology Services of Mid-America. This organization extensively renovated the interior and used the building as a Ronald McDonald House providing housing for the families of seriously ill children who required long-term hospitalization. After the Ronald McDonald House ceased operation, the building briefly housed a spa. It is presently vacant.

THE HANOVER HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD⁷

Hanover Heights developed as a primarily residential neighborhood just outside the city of Rosedale, Kansas. Originally part of the Shawnee Indian reservation, Rosedale was platted in 1872 and incorporated as a third-class city in 1877. When it was named a first-class city twenty years later, it boasted a population of 2,000. Kansas City, Kansas annexed Rosedale in 1922.

In 1890, when the first lots were platted at the northwest corner of State Line Road and Olathe Boulevard, Hanover Heights lay outside the Rosedale city limits. Although a second plat for Hanover Heights was filed in 1898, no houses were erected until the early 1900s. Two factors influenced the start of construction in the neighborhood. One was construction of a streetcar line by the Missouri and Kansas Interurban Railway Company in 1904. The line ran from Kansas City, Missouri southwest to Olathe, Kansas (the county seat of Johnson County) along Olathe Boulevard. The second factor was development of the Eleanor Taylor Bell Memorial Hospital a few miles north of Olathe Boulevard in 1905.

In 1911, Rosedale annexed the Hanover Heights neighborhood. A school was completed the following year, and home building began in earnest around 1914. Development continued steadily for the next fifteen years, with a substantial number of houses erected during 1920 and 1921. William P. Faulkner, a local contractor and

⁶ Kansas, Wyandotte County, Rosedale Township, 1920 U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Micropublication T625, Roll 555, Page 4; <http://www.mcpl.lib.mo.us>, Internet, accessed 11 October 2007.

⁷ Unless otherwise noted, information about the Hanover Heights neighborhood comes from Cydney Millstein, "Hanover Heights Historic District," 1987, Survey Report. On file at the Historic Preservation Office, Urban Planning/Zoning Department, Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas.

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developer, constructed many of the houses in Hanover Heights between 1914 and 1924. Befitting the period of construction, more than 50 percent of the neighborhood's housing stock is Craftsman in style. The Neoclassical design of the Gates Funeral Home is distinctive in this context.

In 1920, thirteen acres at 39th Street and Rainbow Boulevard were purchased for a new hospital to be named The Bell Memorial Hospital and The Kansas Medical School. Opened in 1924, the facility (now the University of Kansas Medical Center) has been improved regularly. Hospital expansion began to encroach on the Hanover Heights neighborhood by the middle of the twentieth century. Many homes along Olathe Boulevard, as well as other structures within the neighborhood, have been demolished to make way for the medical center's growing facilities. Today the Gates Funeral Home stands just one block east of the hospital complex.

NEOCLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE

The Neoclassical style was popular for residential, commercial, and civic architecture from about 1895 to 1950. Classical Greek and Roman ideas of proportion, symmetry and design define the style, and a full-height porch on the primary façade is a key identifying feature.⁸ Neoclassical architecture also incorporates influences from earlier styles that were themselves influenced by ancient classical architecture, such as the Georgian Revival style (popular from 1700 to 1780) and the Greek Revival style (popular from 1825 to 1860).

The World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893 at the close of the Victorian era, renewed popular interest in classical design.⁹ The exposition's architects and planners designed the vast majority of buildings on the fairgrounds with a classical theme. The result was an awe-inspiring display of white, colonnaded buildings with pediments, rounded arches, porches, and columns in the classical orders.

Millions of people attended the exposition and millions more saw photographs of the buildings and grounds, spurring the construction of civic and commercial buildings with classical motifs around the country. Banks, post offices, and other civic buildings used the monumentality of Neoclassical design to assert their stability and importance to the community. It followed that the style also became popular for funeral homes, which sought to assert dual images of stability, trustworthiness, and importance to the community as well as domestic comfort to grieving families.

The Neoclassical design for the Gates Funeral Home follows a residential prototype for the style. Features that architect Fred S. Wilson utilized to convey the Neoclassical style include the two-story columned porch; the monumental front entrance with leaded glass fanlight and sidelights; round-arched openings in the dormers;

⁸ McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 343.

⁹ McAlester, 344.

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dentilled eaves; a symmetrical primary façade and paired chimneys on the gable ends. On the interior, the symmetrical center hall plan organized around a central staircase is also typical of Neoclassical design.

ARCHITECT FRED S. WILSON¹⁰

Fred S. Wilson first appears in the Kansas City directory in 1910. A resident of Kansas City, Missouri, the directory lists his occupation as draftsman. He was employed by a series of architectural firms, beginning with Kurfiss and Goddard in 1910, Sanneman and Van Trump in 1911, and finally with Louis S. Curtiss. Wilson remained in Curtiss' employ through the start of World War I. Absent from city directories during the war, it appears that Wilson performed military service during these years. After the war Wilson returned to live in Rosedale, Kansas.

By the end of World War I, Curtiss' architectural practice was slowing down. Although Curtiss no longer retained office staff, Wilson continued to work for him as a construction supervisor. Employment with this architect known for bold, eclectic designs appears to have influenced Wilson's own aesthetic. He executed many of his own designs in exotic revival styles. Within the context of his other work, the Neoclassical design of the Gates Funeral Home is unusually staid.

The Kansas City, Kansas Planning Commission hired Wilson as a staff engineer when the commission formed in 1920. In this role, Wilson prepared maps and other documents for the commission and for its consultant, landscape architect George Kessler. One commission member was Jesse A. Hoel. A few years earlier, Wilson had supervised construction of a Curtiss-designed residence for Hoel in the Westheight Manor neighborhood of Kansas City, Kansas. It is possible that this connection helped Wilson get the job with the planning commission.

During his six- to seven-year employment with the Planning Commission, Wilson also designed a number of buildings for private clients in Kansas City, Kansas. These included an apartment building for the Hoel Realty Company (northeast corner of North 25th Street and Minnesota Avenue; 1920); the Westheight Manor Golf Club (southeast corner of Minnesota Avenue and North Washington Boulevard; 1922, demolished 1929); the Argentine Presbyterian Church (3801 Strong Avenue; 1922); the Clopper Clinic (for planning commission member David D. Clopper; 3701 Strong Avenue; 1924); Brown Road Methodist Episcopal Church (1900 Steele Road; 1925); and a store and apartment building for C.F. Peterson (northeast corner of West 39th Avenue and South Adams Street; 1925).

¹⁰ Biographical information on Fred S. Wilson is from "Fred S. Wilson, Architect and Engineer," on file at the Historic Preservation Office, Urban Planning/Zoning Department, Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas.

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In 1925 Wilson formed a partnership with architects William W. Rose and Joseph A. Ridgway. Known designs by their firm, Rose, Ridgway and Wilson, include residences for Harold M. Franklin (1829 Washington Boulevard; 1926) and for H.J. Perry (1600 North 38th Street; 1926). Wilson left the partnership in September of 1926 and the firm continued as Rose and Ridgway.

Wilson maintained an architectural office at his residence in 1927, the last year he appears in the city directory.

CONCLUSION

The H.W. Gates Funeral Home, built in 1922, is an excellent example of the funeral home property type constructed in communities throughout United States during the early twentieth century. The Neoclassical style of the building conveys the importance of the business within the community and evokes an air of domesticity and comfort, while its large size accommodated the business needs of the funeral parlor as well as living quarters for the undertaker's family.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 179 thru 186 inclusive, Muchlebach Place, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This nomination includes the parcel of land historically associated with the resource.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Photographer: Brad Finch
F-Stop Photography
Kansas City, Missouri

Date of Photographs: October 2007

Location of Original Photographs: State Line & Olathe Investors, LLC

Photograph Number	Description	Camera View
1.	North and east elevations, looking south down State Line Road. (Note: Kansas City, Kansas is on the west [right] side of State Line Road and Kansas City, Missouri is on the east [left] side of State Line Road.)	South-Southwest
2.	North and east elevations, looking west down Olathe Boulevard.	West-Southwest
3.	North elevation	South
4.	North and east elevations	South-Southwest
5.	East elevation	West
6.	South and east elevations	Northwest
7.	South elevation	North
8.	West elevation	East-Northeast
9.	Entrance hall	Northwest
10.	Fireplace, east parlor	East
11.	Stair hall, third floor	North
12.	Typical window with historic window frame	West

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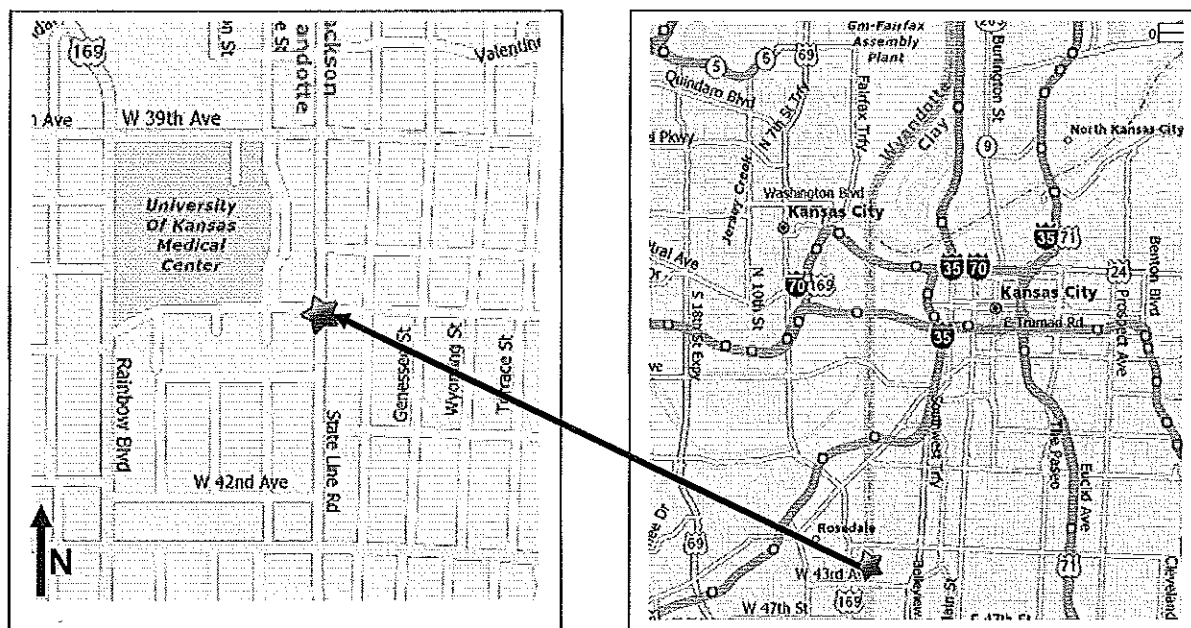


FIGURE 1: PROPERTY LOCATION

H. W. & Mrs. M. L. GATES
Funeral Directors
AND
LICENSED EMBALMERS
IN MISSOURI AND KANSAS.

Rubber Tired Ambulance, Rubber Tired Carriages furnished for Funerals, Weddings, Parties and Hospital Calls. All calls promptly attended to day and night.

State Line and Southwest Boulevard.
BELL TEL. 24 ROSEDALE, HOME TEL. 1680 MAIN.

FIGURE 2:
CITY DIRECTORY ADVERTISEMENT, 1905

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FIGURE 3: Gates Funeral Home, c. 1915 (above) FIGURE 4: Gates Funeral Home, c. 1920 (below)

